



WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL
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8th January 2021

Dear families

Reflections on the January 2021 “return to school” and looking ahead this term

This particular week has seemed a long time in education, and in the world. I know that you have all worked incredibly hard with students to support them with the changing arrangements about schools and the news of coronavirus cases and vaccines. I’m sure that they appreciate, and we do on their behalf, the stability and routine that you have created for them.

As you know, we will no longer be open to most pupils until 22nd February at the earliest, with most students learning online. GCSE, and A Level exams in the summer have also been cancelled.

I doubt I can give definite answers to all of your questions, and there are some things that we will not know for another few weeks at least. This letter is an overview of our arrangements for the coming weeks and how we will be keeping in contact with students and families as things develop.

Teaching and learning provision online

This week, we provided 4 hours of live teaching and learning to students each day in line with government guidance. This guidance has changed in the past 24 hours and now asks us to provide 5 hours of remote learning in total, including recorded or live direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. We will be adjusting our provision accordingly and considering how we best provide the curriculum in practical subjects such as PE, Art and Drama.

More information on our remote learning provision can be found here [on our website](#).

All students should be logged on to Microsoft Teams each day for registration or assembly at 8:35am. Registration for students serves as a welfare check-in, to replace the weekly phone call that families received during the first lockdown. We are now taking attendance registers for online lessons and following up with phone calls to those families where students are not participating in lessons, to investigate reasons and provide support where we can.

Like lessons in school, online learning does include independent work that students must complete and submit to their teacher as a digital document or sometimes a photo of creative work or handwritten answers. Please try to support them if you can, by providing them with a place to work at home and basic materials. If students do not have their exercise books to work in, they can come to school to collect them if they arrange this with their teachers and pastoral leader in advance.

If students have access with Teams access or logging into online learning, they should contact their pastoral leader in the first instance:

- Year 7: Ms Lawson lawson@williamellis.camden.sch.uk
- Year 8: Ms Conran conran@williamellis.camden.sch.uk
- Year 9 & 10: Mr Parry parry@williamellis.camden.sch.uk
- Year 11: Ms Mercier Peart peart@williamellis.camden.sch.uk
- Year 12: Mr Mangham mangham@williamellis.camden.sch.uk
- Year 13: Dr Smith smith@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Devices and digital access

We have given approximately 100 laptops to students who do not have keyboard devices and some SIM cards to those who need support with internet access. These have been supplied by the Department for Education and with the support of Camden Learning, and the fundraising efforts of WESPA. If any students do not have a laptop, they can use at home they should also contact their pastoral leader.

Cancellation of exams and 6th form applications

I appreciate the particular difficulties for the students in exam years who have found out that their exams will be cancelled. However, we know that there will be guidance on teacher assessment and students in years 11 and 13 should expect work in online lessons to be assessed, and to have assessments when they return to school when we re-open. Therefore, it is very important that they fully attend and engage with online lessons.

Year 11 are embarking on the journey towards their next stage of education – over the next few weeks, they will be completing their application form for LaSWAP, as well as having careers and guidance interviews. Parents and students may have questions about LaSWAP – please look at the link below for the online Open Evening materials from LaSWAP, and look out for an email from Ms Wilson inviting you to a webinar at 8pm on Monday evening when you can ask her your questions directly.

[LaSWAP Sixth Form Consortium - Open evening live stream](#)

Literacy and reading

It is important to ensure your son is still taking time to read for pleasure during this period away from school. At Camden Library online you can access a brilliant range of novels for teenagers, children and adults. You just have to fill out your name and address, choose a PIN and you will be issued with a temporary borrowing code. You can then either download the book or read it online. The books will be saved to your account for 21 days.

You can register here: [Register online | Camden Libraries \(spydus.co.uk\)](#)

You can browse the E books here: [Teens - No wait, no problems - London Borough of Camden - OverDrive](#)

In one of the weekly morning registration times, students will be reading a news article from The Day online newspaper and focussing on 5 new words each week. All KS3 and KS4 William Ellis students have free access to this site. Please encourage your son to read these news articles. You can access simplified versions of all articles and some can even be translated into other

European languages. <https://theday.co.uk/?token=OKHjiJWyukfxMyC%2FoKU4l0jP5NdAHwzn>

If you have any questions about reading at home or access to physical books, please contact Lucy Strike, Associate Assistant Head teachers, by email strike@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

On site provision

We do have provision in school for students who are vulnerable and whose parents or carers are key workers, if other supervision options are not available. Students who are in school participate in online lessons with their peers, as well some practical activities such as PE. Students attending should come to school in full school uniform and will need to bring the relevant books and stationery. They should bring their PE kit on the days that they have PE. In addition, if they have a set of headphones, they should bring them to school. Lunch is provided in school.

All students who are coming into school will be asked to take a rapid coronavirus test once per week so that we can monitor cases in the school and community. The student and family concerned will be notified within half an hour if a test result is positive.

Free school meals

The government have confirmed that they will re-start the national voucher scheme used for free school meals in the Spring and Summer of 2020, and so we will be contacting families as soon as this comes back online. If the delay of the vouchers causes any difficulties, students eligible for free school meals can attend

school as part of our on-site provision for lunchtime. Again, parents should contact the pastoral leader for the correct year group to arrange this.

I realise that you will have many further questions and no doubt I will need to provide updates as the guidance from the government changes. I would like to finish by reiterating my thanks to you and extend a huge thank you to all the staff in school who have worked so hard to deal with the challenges we have been faced with this week.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Izzy Jones', written in a cursive style.

Izzy Jones
Headteacher